

Zamfara bandits kill 31 in fresh attacks, steal food

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Zamfara Governor Bello Muhammad Matawalle

- I ran into bush and took refuge on a tree – Resident
- Recalcitrant bandits responsible for killings, say police

Maiharaji Altine, Gusau

There were concerns in Zamfara State on Thursday about the amnesty the state government granted bandits following the killing of 31 people by hoodlums in two separate attacks on Tuesday.

No fewer than 29 people were killed by bandits at the Babban Rafi village in the Gummi Local Government Area of the state on Tuesday.

The same day, bandits killed two health workers at Makosa village in the Zurmi Local Government Area of the state.

An indigene of Babban Rafi, Mallam Musa Ibrahim, who narrowly escaped, narrated his ordeal in a telephone interview with our correspondent on Thursday.

Ibrahim said the bandits, who were carrying AK-47 rifles, arrived at the village in the early hours of Tuesday on motorbikes and started shooting sporadically.

The attacks occurred a day before the state Governor, Bello Matawalle, at the 2020 Armed Forces Remembrance Day in Gusua, the state capital, on Wednesday, warned unrepentant bandits to surrender their arms.

Before the governor's assumption of office, there were increasing cases of killings and kidnapping by bandits.

The Commissioner of Police in the state, Usman Nagoggo, on January 8 this year, said no fewer than 6,319 people were killed by bandits in the state in 2019 alone.

But the governor, as part of efforts to solve the problem, in August last year, granted amnesty to repentant bandits, who released no fewer

than 427 hostages after embracing the peace initiative of the state government.

Despite the amnesty, there have been attacks in the state. On Tuesday, two health workers were killed in the Makosa village in the Zurmi LGA.

The two health workers, whose names were given as Lawali Suleiman and Aliyu Mohammed, were on duty administering polio vaccine when the bandits stormed the village.

An indigene of the area, who spoke to our correspondent on the phone on condition of anonymity, said the bandits arrived in the village at 2:30pm and headed towards the Primary Health Centre and asked everybody to surrender their belongings.

The source stated that there was misunderstanding between the bandits and the health workers because they (the health workers) refused to surrender their mobile telephone.

This was said to have provoked the bandits and made them to open fire on the health workers, killing them on the spot.

The source said, “After robbing the people of their belongings, the bandits also carted away their animals.”

Recalcitrant bandits responsible for attacks – Police

Confirming the attack, the Police Public Relations Officer, Mohammed Shehu, said, “Those who launched the attack were part of the recalcitrant bandits who stormed the village with the intention of committing robbery.”

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Bandits pursued those who ran into bush and killed more – Residents

In the Babban Rafi village in the Gummi LGA bandits killed 29 people on Tuesday. According to a resident of the village, Ibrahim, while many people were killed, others managed to run into the bush. He explained that the bandits later pursued those who ran into the bush and killed some of them.

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